

"DMI are always very creative in coming up with ideas..." Katie Phillips, ChildLine

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FACTOR- NUDGING QUESTIONS

"The DMI team provides a high level of creativity and offers creative & practical solutions" - Endemol

Those that are habitually creative often find inspiration by changing one or more factors of something that already exists... Those that are more effortful in their creativity, however, might appreciate this technique which mostly amounts to possessing a thought-provoking list of 'Factor-Nudging Questions'!

So how does a list help? Well, it's mostly self-evident, but can be a little 'knacky'. We'll give an example in a bit... Suffice to say that, very often, the initial ideas people have can be somewhat mundane or lacklustre because they're obvious. Any idea that comprises variable factors, though, can become much more interesting by adding, removing, emphasizing or de-emphasizing certain aspects.

Here's an example: When one of the suggestions for a new DMI video was a 'Rube Goldberg Machine', the idea itself was immediately popular internally. It ran the risk, though, of seeming very commonplace: these kinetic machines have been done many, many times... And they've been done bigger and more intricately than we could afford to do! It's only after we began nudging the individual factors that the idea began to lift.

How do you know which factors to nudge? This is where it's a little bit of a knack! In our example, just answering the questions on this list whilst watching some of the machines that have been made before, would immediately suggest what to do – and what not to do! Surprisingly, perhaps, one of our earliest thoughts was that the machine should sound interesting as much as anything else...

We also chose to light and dress the setting somewhat because so many of these machines look like they're made in the blandest of places – and out of things that aren't in themselves very appealing. We also put the camera much closer to the action than is common, which creates far more rich and interesting imagery. Just as critically, we decided that our sequence would only use toys. This gives the idea a theme as well as an emotional resonance of sorts.

Finally, the piece delivers a message at the end – in other words, our Rube Goldberg Machine serves a purpose. Most of the machines you find don't end very satisfyingly and take a long time to do nothing... You can probably see how each of these factors contributes to the basic idea and makes it feel more fresh and layered.

More than any other technique about which we've written, this one seems – at first glance – the most "Something and nothing". So it's important to stress that all of the ideas that made DMI's 2013 Christmas Video better would naturally suggest themselves if one runs through the questions. It's almost effortless, so it can be a surprise to see how many avenues of thought open up when you start nudging factors.

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What happens creatively if we make this...

Bigger?
Smaller?
In different materials?
Longer? Or shorter?
Black and white? Or in a different colour?

What ideas come to mind if we think about...

Doing it with a different focus?
Making it transparent?
Changing its scale?
Changing its shape?
Changing its dimension - i.e. 2D or 3D?
Putting holes in it?

What new ideas come to mind when we...

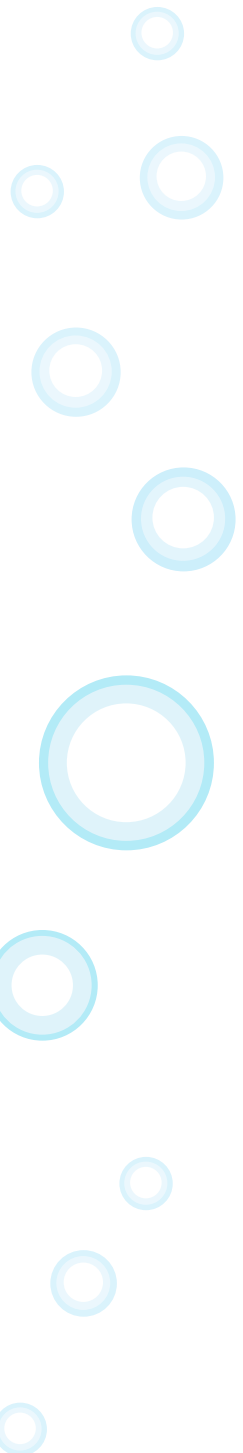
Make it feel antique / historic?
Make it feel futuristic?
Make it hopeful?
Make it downbeat?
Add or remove a theme?
Arrange the content in a different order?
Do it to music?
Do it in silence?

What would it be like if we...

Vary any levels that are in it?
Think of the first idea as just one layer?
Combine it with a similarly themed idea?
Preface or follow it with something relevant?
Tell a story, or make it part of a story?
Make it funny? Or emotional?

If it's a video, what difference would there be...

Using a voiceover?
Putting a camera in close?
Make big things seem smaller? Or vice versa?
Using an effect lens?
After slowing it down or speeding it up?



"The Creative Habit went down a storm with a group of people I know are not easy to please!"
Sarah Lawrence, Communications Lead, CE IS Planning & Performance Team Centrica

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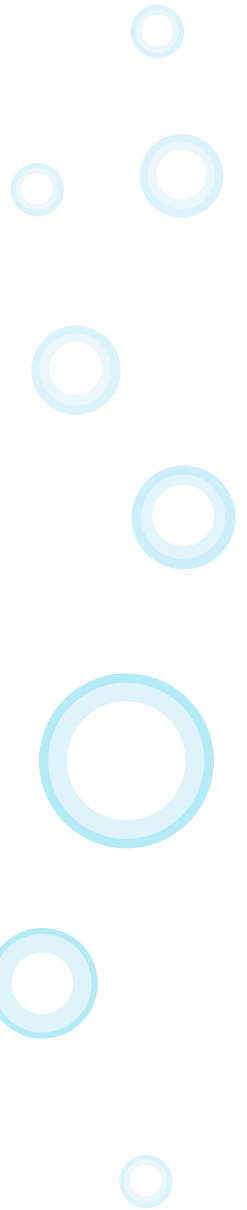


What if we...

Do exactly the opposite?
Change its orientation? Put something in?
Take something out?
Change the reason for doing it?
Turn it upside down?

Is there a way to...

Do it with/without technology?
Make it look fantastical?
Start with logic?
Start with how we want it to sound?
Ask how we want it to make people feel?
Fill in any 'dead spots'?
Do it audibly, not visually?
Change the speed of it?



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